

G. Kurt Piehler

Center for the Study of War and Society, Department of History, University of Tennessee

Knoxville, Tennessee

Revolutionary War Bibliography

Organization of American Historians and National Park Service

9/12/2003

The Broad Overview

Even before the Revolutionary War ended in 1783, Americans and their British adversaries began efforts to document this struggle. Many of these early histories have been reprinted in modern editions and offer insights into how the Revolutionary generation saw the struggle for independence. Among the earliest general accounts of the conflict are David Ramsay's History of the American Revolution (1789, Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1990) and Mercy Otis Warren's three volume History of the Rise, Progress, and Termination of the American Revolution (1805, Indianapolis, Liberty Classics, 1988). A substantial number of Americans remained loyal to the British Crown, John Adams estimated the number as high as one-third of the population, and Peter Oliver's Origins and Progress of the American Revolution (1781, San Marino: Huntington Library, 1961) wrote one of the earliest histories from the loyalist perspective.

There are several excellent general histories of the Revolutionary War. Among the best are Robert Middlekauff, The Glorious Cause: The American Revolution, 1763-1789 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982) and Edward Countryman's The American Revolution (New York: Hill and Wang, 1985). Ray Raphael, A People's History of the American Revolution: How Common People Shaped the Fight for Independence (New York: New Press, 2001) account offers a narrative account that centers around the participation of laborers, African Americans, women, and Indians during the war for independence.

For an overview that focuses more narrowly on the military struggle, see Christopher Ward's two volume The War of the American Revolution (New York: MacMillan, 1952); Willard M. Wallace, Appeals to Arms: A Military History of the American Revolution (1951, Chicago, Quadrangle, 1964) and Marshal Smelser, The Winning of Independence (New York: Viewpoints, 1972). For a monograph seeking to put the American Revolution in a world wide context, see R. Ernest Dupuy, et. al., The American Revolution: A Global War (New York: D. McKay, 1977). James Kirby Martin and Mark Edward Lender, A Respectable Army: The Military Origins of the Republic, 1763-1789 (Arlington Heights: Harlan Davidson, 1982) incorporates the work of social historians who focused on the experiences of the "common soldier." The war from the British perspective is considered by Piers Mackesy, The War for America, 1775-1783 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964) and William Seymour, The Price of Folly: British Blunders in the War of American Independence (Washington: Brassey's, 1995).

There are several anthologies that incorporate important interpretations of the Revolutionary War. These include Arms and Men: The Military Character of the American

Revolution (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1984) edited by Ronald Hoffman and Peter J. Albert and The World Turned Upside Down: The American Victory in the War of Independence (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1988) edited by John E. Ferling. Don Higginbotham, War and Society in Revolutionary America: The Wider Dimensions of the Conflict (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1988) includes an influential essay that suggests parallels between British efforts in the American Revolution and the U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War. John Shy in A People Numerous and Armed: Reflections on the Military Struggle for American Independence, rev. ed. (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1990) includes valuable essays on the role of the militia, the legacy of the American Revolution on the American pattern of war, and a biography of a remarkable “average” combatant “Long Bill Scott.” For essays focusing on history of the Revolution from the “bottom up” with special attention to role of women, African Americans, and workers in the Revolutionary cause, see The American Revolution: Explorations in the History of American Radicalism (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1976) edited Alfred F. Young.

There are two important works that place the American Revolution in the context of U.S. military history. Allan R. Millett and Peter Maslowski, For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States of the United States of America (New York: Free Press, rev. ed., 1994) is the most authoritative single volume survey of American military history. Russell F. Wiegley, The American Way of War (New York: Macmillan, 1973) has two chapters that examine the impact of the Revolutionary War on U.S. strategic thought. In his highly influential work, he argued that Washington embraced a strategy of attrition and sought to wear down the British armies. In contrast to Washington, Nathanael Greene in his campaigns against

the British made use of “partisan” or guerilla tactics in order to erode British strength.

The Legacy of the Imperial Wars and the Origins of the American Revolution

The Revolutionary War stemmed in part from the involvement of the thirteen colonies in a series of imperial wars fought by Great Britain against France and other European Powers.

For a broad overview of this period, see Douglas Edward Leach: Arms for Empire: A British History of the British Colonies in North America, 1607-1763 (New York: Macmillan, 1973).

For a study which focuses on Indian-European conflict in the colonial era, see Ian K. Steele, Warpaths: Invasions of North America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

The last imperial war of the colonial era, the Seven’s Years War (1754-1763) or more popularly known in the colonies as the French and Indian War, had far reaching implications for British-American relations. Britain sent substantial army and naval forces to fight in this conflict and a number of colonial governments, especially Massachusetts, enlisted a number of provincial units to also fight. Many of the senior leadership of the Revolutionary War Army, most notably George Washington, Charles Lee, Horatio Gates, and Daniel Morgan, served with British forces. For a general history of this conflict, see Fred Anderson’s Crucible of War: the Seven Years’ War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000).

Some historians maintain that the Seven Year’s War sowed the “seeds” of the American Revolution, most notably Alan Rogers, Empire and Liberty: American Resistance to British Authority, 1755-1763 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974) and Douglas Leach,

Roots of Conflict: British Armed Forces and Colonial Americans: 1677-1763 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986). For a view that argues colonial and British military relations initially grew closer as a result of this conflict, see John Shy, Toward Lexington: The Role of the British Army in the Coming of the American Revolution (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965).

A voluminous literature exists on the causes of the American Revolution. British victory in 1763 resulted in the expulsion of France from North America, but it also left a substantial national debt that led the British Parliament to pass in the 1760s and early 1770s a series of taxes on the American colonies. Edmund and Helen Morgan's The Stamp Act Crisis: the Prologue to Revolution (New York: Collier, rev. ed., 1963) sees British decision to tax American colonies as sparking inevitable resistance that eventually escalated to war. Bernard Bailyn's The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967) argues that deeper fears sparked the American resistance. In his view, Americans who were avid readers of radical Whig opposition literature, perceived Parliamentary taxation and the deployment of British troops to enforce them, as threatening American liberty. For a differing view that minimizes the impact of radical Whig ideology in the coming of the American Revolution and stresses the growing "modernity" of colonial society, see Jon Butler, Becoming America: The Revolution before 1776 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000).

Gary B. Nash, The Urban Crucible: Social Change, Political Consciousness, and the Origins of the American Revolution (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979) traces the pivotal role the cities of Boston, New York, and Philadelphia played in the coming of the Revolution. His wide ranging work traces the impact of the successive imperial wars on these

communities as well as the pivotal role of “crowd” activity in undermining imperial authority. More recently, Woody Holton’s Forced Founders: Indians, Debtors, Slaves and the Making of the American Revolution in Virginia (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999) offers a case-study that argues those on the “bottom” of Virginia society, especially small farmers and debtors, played a crucial role in prodding the leadership of Old Dominion to break with England.

As relations between Britain and the American colonies deteriorated over the course of the 1760s and 1770s, London increasingly relied on the Army to enforce Parliamentary acts. The deployment of British troops to Boston served as a significant source of tension in the 1760s and 1770s in provoking colonial resistance. This theme is examined in John Philip Reid’s In Defiance of the Law: The Standing-Army Controversy, the Two Constitutions, and the Coming of the American Revolution (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981). The studies of Hiller Zober, The Boston Massacre (New York: W. W. Norton, 1970) and Benjamin W. Labaree, The Boston Tea Party (1964, Boston: Northeastern University, 1979) examine why British troops fired on a crowd of Bostonians on March 5, 1770 and the legal, political, and social ramifications of this event.

The Battles of Lexington and Concord in 1775 are widely hailed as the beginning of the American Revolution. For an understanding of the events leading up to this momentous battle, see Neil R. Stout, The Perfect Crisis: The Beginning of the Revolutionary War (New York: New York University Press, 1976) and David Hackett Fischer’s Paul Revere’s Ride (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994). An account of the this battle and subsequent events can found in Allen French’s The First Year of the American Revolution (Boston: Houghton Mifflin,

1934).

The Generals, Enlisted Ranks and Allies

In 1775, the Second Continental Congress made the militia and other forces that gathered around Boston after the Battles of Lexington and Concord into the Continental Army. In addition, the Second Continental Congress took it upon themselves to name Virginian George Washington as the commander of this new army. Both decisions were momentous for ultimately all thirteen colonies contributed troops and supplies to the new Continental Army. Even before the Revolutionary War ended, George Washington received widespread adulation and while still alive his birthday was marked by public celebrations. There is a voluminous literature on Washington and the pivotal role he played in the Revolutionary War.

Early biographers, most notably Mason Weems, *A History of the Life and Death, Virtues, and Exploits of General George Washington* (1799, Armonk: Sharpe, 1996), portrayed this Revolutionary leader and first president as a near demigod nearly devoid of humanity. Modern scholars of Washington have sought to offer more balanced biographies that stress Washington's humanity and fallibility as well as his exemplary leadership qualities. There are a number of excellent multi-volume biographies to draw upon including Douglas Southall Freeman, *George Washington: A Biography*, 7 vols. (New York: Scribner, 1948-1957) and James Thomas Flexner, *George Washington*, 4 vols. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1965-1972). Marcus Cunliffe's *George Washington: Man and Monument* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1958) is still considered one of the best single volume works. Also useful are John E. Ferling, *The First*

of Men: A Life of George Washington (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1998) and Don Higginbotham, George Washington and the American Military Tradition (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1985).

One can access much of Washington's correspondence and writing. At the bicentennial of his birth, the federal government began publishing a massive 39 volume set of his outgoing correspondence edited by John C. Fitzpatrick, The Writings of George Washington, from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1931-1944). Most major public and college libraries that serve as a federal depository library will own this set. More recently, a modern edition of Washington's correspondence is being edited at the University of Virginia. The Revolutionary War correspondence, The Papers of George Washington: Revolutionary War Series, 12 volumes (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1985-) currently takes his story through the end of 1777. But the editors of the modern Washington correspondence have already published his correspondence for the Confederation years (1784-1788).

The hagiography surrounding Washington has often distorted interpretations of several of his more controversial subordinates. Nonetheless there has emerged several excellent biographical treatments of key members of the Revolutionary War's officer corps. The military career of Charles Lee, second in command of the Continental Army in the early years of the war and later court-martialed by George Washington for his actions at the Battle of Monmouth, is examined by John Richard Alden, General Charles Lee, Traitor or Patriot? (Baton Rouge, Louisiana University Press, 1951). Horatio Gates's career, victor at the Battle of Saratoga, is considered in relationship to his British adversary Johnny Burgoyne in Max M. Mintz's The

Generals of Saratoga: John Burgoyne and Horatio Gates (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990). Also valuable is Paul David Nelson, General Horatio Gates: A Biography (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1976).

The life of Benedict Arnold, a brave and skilled battlefield leader who ultimately betrayed the American cause is examined by James Thomas Flexner, The Traitor and the Spy: Benedict Arnold and John Andre (2 ed., Boston: Little, Brown, 1975), Clare Brandt, The Man in the Mirror: A Life of Benedict Arnold (New York: Random, 1994). Without excusing his treason, James Kirby Martin, Benedict Arnold, Revolutionary Hero: An American Warrior Reconsidered (New York: New York University Press, 1997) argues that Arnold's betrayal stemmed from the frustrations experienced by many of his fellow officers, especially their lack of recognition and inadequate pay.

Alexander Hamilton served as an aide to Washington through the early part of the war and recent biographies include, Forest McDonald, Alexander Hamilton: A Biography (New York: Norton, 1979) and Jacob Cooke, Alexander Hamilton: A Biography (New York: Scribner's 1979). The Revolutionary Era and postwar correspondence of Hamilton has been published in Harold C. Syrett, et. al., editors The Papers of Alexander Hamilton 27 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961-1987). Other valuable biographies of important commanders are Hal T. Shelton, General Richard Montgomery and the American Revolution: From Redcoat to Rebel (New York: New York University Press, 1993); Don R. Gerlach, Proud Patriot: Philip Schuyler and the War of Independence, 1775-1783 (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1987); Paul David Nelson, Anthony Wayne: Soldier of the Early Republic, 1775-1783 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985) and North Callahan, Henry Knox:

George Washington's General (New York: Rinehart, 1958). George Washington's Generals (New York: Morrow, 1964) edited by George A. Billias offers the best single set of essays assessing the military careers of Washington's key subordinates.

Despite Nathanael Greene's significance to the Revolutionary cause, the last major full-length biography of him is Theodore Thayer's, Nathanael Greene: Strategist of the American Revolution (New York: Twayne, 1960). Greene's career is documented by a superb documentary edition edited by Richard K. Showman, Dennis Conrad, et. al. The Papers of Nathanael Greene, 13 vols. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1976-2003). There are several excellent biographies of other significant generals who played crucial roles in southern campaigns of 1780-1782. David B. Mattern, Benjamin Lincoln and the American Revolution (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1995) examined the career of the New England general who surrendered Charleston, South Carolina to the British in 1780. Dan Higginbotham's Daniel Morgan: Revolutionary Rifleman (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1961) offers a highly readable account of the victor of Cowpens and one of the best battlefield leaders of the conflict. Hugh F. Rankin, Francis Marion: The Swamp Fox (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1973) traces the military career of Greene's best partisan fighter.

A number of foreign officers came to America to serve in the Continental Army. Among the most idealistic was Marquis de Lafayette. His correspondence during the Revolutionary War is edited by Stanley J. Idzerda, Lafayette in the Age of the American Revolution: Selected Letters and Papers et. al., 4 vols. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977--). Lafayette Joins the American Army (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1937) and Lafayette and the Close of the American Revolution (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942) by Louis Gottschalk still

remain authoritative. Friedrich Wilhelm Ludolf Gerhard Augustin, better known by Americans as Baron von Steuben, played a crucial role in training the Continental Army during the winter of 1778 at Valley Forge. For a biography of this Prussian officer who emigrated to Revolutionary America, see John M. Palmer, General von Steuben (1937, Port Washington: Kennikat Press, 1966).

Revolutionary records are incomplete and historians have tried to determine such basic facts as how many men and women served in the Revolutionary army and the extent of casualties. Indispensable works addressing these areas include, Howard H. Peckham, editor, The Toll of Independence: Engagements and Battle Casualties of the American Revolution (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974) and Charles H. Lesser, ed., The Sinews of Independence: Monthly Strength Reports of the Continental Army (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976).

Since the Second World War there has been a new focus by historians to understand the experiences of the “average” soldier in combat. During this conflict, military historians such as S. L. A. Marshall and Forrest Pogue started interviewing combatants after battle. The World War II generation was not the first generation of warriors to be interviewed. One of the richest, but still underutilized sources for understanding the experiences of the average soldier in the Revolution, is the massive pension records compiled by the federal government in the aftermath of the War of 1812. In 1818, the U.S. Congress enacted the first of a series of generous pension programs for Revolutionary War veterans. Since the written records were fragmentary or non-existent, veterans had to offer depositions recounting their military service. These records are voluminous and preserved in the United States National Archives, but are also available on

microfilm. Many libraries and historical societies, especially those that cater to genealogists will own this set. A finding aid for this microfilm collection exists, see [Index of Revolutionary War Pension Applications in the National Archives](#) (Washington: National Genealogical Society, 1976). John C. Dann, [The Revolution Remembered: Eyewitness Accounts of the War for Independence](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980) has reprinted the “best” of these pension records.

One of the few diaries of a common soldier from the war itself to survive is by Jeremiah Greenman and published as [Diary of a Common Soldier in the American Revolution, 1775-1783](#) (Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1978) and edited by Robert C. Bray and Paul E. Bushnell. In the 1820s and 1830s a growing number of Revolutionary war veterans began to write autobiographies. George F. Scheer edited a modern edition of one 1830 autobiography by Joseph Plumb Martin, [Private Yankee Doodle: Being a Narrative of Some of the Adventures, Dangers, and Sufferings of a Revolutionary Soldier](#) (1830, Boston: Little, Brown, 1962). Alfred F. Young offers one of the best biographies of an average combatant in [The Shoemaker and the Tea Party](#) (Boston: Beacon Press, 1999).

Who fought and why has been an important issue for historians of war since the 1960s. Mark Lender in an essay “The Enlisted Line: The Continental Soldiers of New Jersey Brigade: The Continental Line as an American Standing Army” in Peter Karsten’s [The Military in America: From the Colonial Era to the Present](#) (New York: Free Press, rev. ed. 1986) argues that economic motivation remained one of the prime reasons for encouraging soldiers to enlist in Washington’s Army. In his case study of the New Jersey Continentals, Lender maintained that the enlisted ranks were composed disproportionately of the poor, the landless, and African

Americans. In his wider study Charles Patrick Neimeyer, America Goes to War: A Social History of the Continental Army (New York: New York University Press, 1996) also offers a similar interpretation.

Other historians disagree with this assessment. In his magisterial A Revolutionary People at War: The Continental Army and American Character, 1775-1783 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), Charles Royster insists that economic forces did not serve reason for encouraging either the officer corps or enlisted ranks to either enlist or fight. Royster describes how the Continental Army over time evolved into an increasingly professionalized force, especially after enduring the winter at Valley Forge and receiving the training of Baron Von Steuben. The growing “professionalism” of the Continental Army, especially the officer corps is a major theme of Robert K. Wright, Jr.’s, The Continental Army (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1983). For a highly regarded examination of the contribution of one state’s line to the war effort, see Hugh F. Rankin, The North Carolina Continentals (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1971).

Harry M. Ward has written three biographies of “second tier” generals that not only assesses their battle leadership, but also examines the experiences of the soldiers that served under them, see General William Maxwell and the New Jersey Continentals (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1997); Charles Scott and the Spirit of 1776 (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1989) and Major General Adam Stephen and the Cause of the American Revolution (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1989).

One of the dominant images in the popular memory are ill fed and clothed Revolutionary soldiers freezing in the cold in Valley Forge in the winter of 1778. For a pioneering study

outlining how the supply system for Washington's forces worked, see Erna Risch, Supplying Washington's Army (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1981). E. Wayne Carp's To Starve the Army at Pleasure: Continental Army Administration and American Political Culture, 1775-1783 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984) examines why the Revolutionary Army faced such hardships in a relatively prosperous land. In his account, Carp finds that many staff officers in the Quartermaster Corps went to heroic lengths to supply the Continental Army. But he finds deep rooted reluctance by civilians to grant much power to either the Continental Congress or the Army to solve the problem resulted in an ill supplied troops.

Military medicine in the Continental Army is examined by Mary C. Gillett, The Army Medical Department, 1775-1818 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1981). For the impact of smallpox and efforts to contain it within Washington's army, see Elizabeth A. Fenn, Pox American: The Great Smallpox Epidemic of 1775-82 (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001). The role of the engineers can be traced in Paul K. Walker, ed., Engineers of Independence: A Documentary History of the Army Engineers in the American Revolution, 1775-1783 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1982).

The American Revolution was won not only with by the Continental Army, but state militia units played a crucial role in the struggle. Lawrence Delbert Cress, Citizens in Arms: The Army and the Militia in American Society to the War of 1812 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982) traces the debates among Revolutionary leaders over leaders over the respective contributions of the militia and standing army to the struggle against Britain. Steven Rosswurm maintains in Arms, Country, and Class: The Philadelphia Militia and the "Lower

Sorts” During the American Revolution (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1987) that the Philadelphia militia were ideologically committed to a more egalitarian political system.

A considerable debate exists concerning the effectiveness of the militia. Emory Upton’s Military Policy of the United States since 1775 (1904, Westport: Greenwood Press, 1968) viewed the American dependence on militia forces as almost endangering the American cause. Although there is a consensus regarding the crucial role of the Continental Army in bearing the brunt of battlefield engagements with the British Army, there has been a steady recognition and understanding of the vital role of the militia by such scholars as Don Higginbotham and John Shy. Mark V. Kwasny’s Washington’s Partisan War, 1775-1783 (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1996) offers the most recent positive assessment of the military effectiveness of the militia.

Influenced by the civil rights and women’s movements, historians in the 1960s began to examine the role both African Americans and women played in the struggle for independence. African Americans fought in both the American and British armies. For a pioneering work, see Benjamin Quarles, The Negro in the American Revolution (1961, New York: W. W. Norton, 1973). Sylvia R. Frey’s Water from the Rock: Black Resistance in a Revolutionary Age (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991) examines how African Americans sought to gain freedom and autonomy during the tumult of war.

In the early 1970s. Linda Grant De Pauw argued that women played a crucial role in the Revolutionary War not only as nurses, but also served in the artillery corps. Her pioneering research on “Molly Pitcher” and the Battle of Monmouth has been incorporated into her wider narrative examining women’s role in war entitled Battle Cries and Lullabies: Women in War

from Prehistory to the Present (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998). Linda Kerber's Liberty Daughter's: Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in the Revolutionary America (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980) differs with De Pauw's assessment of the role of women in the Revolutionary cause. Holly A. Mayer, Belonging to the Army: Camp Followers and Community during the American Revolution (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1996) offers the first full length scholarly monograph examining the crucial role of women in the Continental Army. For a biography of a women warrior who saw substantial combat disguised as a man, see Lucy Freeman and Alma Bond, America's First Woman Warrior: The Courage of Deborah Sampson (New York: Paragon House, 1992). Another pioneering work on the role of women in the Revolutionary War focusing on the home front is Mary Beth Norton's Liberty's Daughter: The Revolutionary War Experience of American Women, 1750-1800 (Boston: Little, Brown, 1980).

Outside aid from European powers remained essential to the American cause. The classic accounts of American diplomacy is Samuel Flagg Bemis, The Diplomacy of the American Revolution (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1957). For a more recent account, see Jonathan R. Dull, A Diplomatic History of the American Revolution (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985). France formally allied with the American war effort in 1778 and provided vital loans, grants, and military forces which played a decisive role in the Revolutionary struggle. Despite the significance of this support, this remains one of the understudied areas of the American Revolution, see William C. Stinchcombe, The American Revolution and the French Alliance (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1969) and an anthology edited by Ronald Hoffman and Peter J. Albert, Diplomacy and Revolution: The

Franco-American Alliance of 1778 (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1981).

The French Army's participation on American soil is examined by Howard C. Rice Jr. and Anne S. K. Brown, eds., The American Campaigns of Rochambeau's Army, 1780, 1781, 1782, 1783 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972) and Lee B. Kennett, The French Forces in America, 1770-1783 (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1977). For a biography of French Army commander, see Arnold Whitridge, Rochambeau (New York: Macmillan, 1965).

The Home Front

The Revolutionary War brought far reaching change to American society. Historians have long debated whether the American Revolution was simply a war for independence or an internal struggle over who should rule at home. J. Franklin Jameson's short work The American Revolution Considered as a Social Movement (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1926) is still a valuable starting place. The transformation of American political and social order is examined by Gordon Wood in The Radicalism of the American Revolution (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992).

Essential for understanding the Revolutionary War effort is E. James Ferguson's The Power of the Purse: A History of American Public Finance, 1776-1790 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1961). Initially, the Continental Army was financed by the Continental Congress issuing paper currency, but as the struggle continued, foreign loans and requisitions from states became crucial to sustaining forces in the field. Robert Morris in the closing years of the war, played a central role in raising the necessary funds to continue the struggle. His correspondence as "Superintendent of Finance" is edited by E. James Ferguson, et al., The

Papers of Robert Morris, 1781-1784, 9 volumes (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1973-1999).

The Revolutionary War was not a distant war for most Americans. Despite the nature of the conflict, historians have devoted surprisingly little attention to the relationship of the home front to the war effort. For some notable exceptions centered around individual regions and communities, see Adrian C. Leiby, The Revolutionary War in the Hackensack Valley: The Jersey Dutch and the Neutral Ground, 1775-1783 (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1962); Robert Gross's case study of Concord, Massachusetts, The Minutemen and their World (New York: Hill and Wang, 1976) and Donald Wallace White, A Village at War, Chatham and the American Revolution (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson, 1979). Richard Buel in Dear Liberty: Connecticut's Mobilization for the Revolutionary War (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1980) shows the considerable strains the war effort placed on the civilian society and support for the Continental cause.

The British Adversary

Traditionally, less attention has been given to the British side of the Revolutionary War. Several excellent biographies exist for Washington's adversaries. George Washington's Opponents: British Generals and Admirals in the American Revolution (New York: Morrow, 1969) edited by George A. Billias is an excellent starting point for assessing the qualities of Washington's opponent. Biographies of key British commanders include, John Richard Alden, General Gage in America (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press,

1948); Ira Gruber, The Howe Brothers and the American Revolution (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1972) and William B. Willcox, The Portrait of a General: Sir Henry Clinton in the War of Independence (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976). Two British generals surrendered whole armies at Saratoga (1777) and Yorktown (1781). Burgoyne is the subject of several excellent biographies including Gerald Howson, Burgoyne of Saratoga (New York: Times Books, 1979) and Richard J. Hargrove, Jr., General John Burgoyne (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1983). Franklin and Mary Wickwire, Cornwallis: The American Adventure (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1970) examines the military career of the general whose surrender at Yorktown ultimately paved the way for American independence. The controversial career of Banastre Tarleton is considered by Robert D. Bass in The Green Dragoon: The Lives of Banastre Tarleton and Mary Robinson (New York: Holt, 1957).

Sylvia Frey in The British Soldier in America: A Social History of Military Life in the Revolutionary Period (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981) focuses on the lower ranks of the British army. She finds an army that does not subscribe to rigid discipline and maintained a stark hierarchy. At the same time, Frey concludes that British soldiers were not the “scum of England” but usually displaced agricultural laborers and artisans. She sees regimental ties as crucial in binding officers and men. Supplying this Army, fighting over 3,000 miles from England is examined by R. Arthur Bowler, Logistics and the Failure of the British Army in America, 1775-1783 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975) and David Syrett, Shipping and the American War: A Study of British Transport Organization (London: Athlone Press, 1970).

Many Americans remained loyal to the Crown. For an overview of the Loyalist’s war

see, Paul Hulbert Smith, Loyalists and Redcoats: A Study in British Revolutionary Policy (New York: W. W. Norton, 1964) and Wallace Brown, The Good Americans: The Loyalists in the American Revolution (New York: Morrow, 1969). A substantial number of loyalists served in British forces during the Revolution. The life of one Loyalist battle leader is chronicled in Edward J. Cashin Jr.'s The King's Ranger: Thomas Brown and the American Revolution on the Southern Frontier (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1989).

Not all British colonies in North America rebelled against Britain. Andrew Jackson O'Shaughnessy, An Empire Divided: The American Revolution and the British Caribbean (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000) examines why such colonies as Jamaica, Barbados, the Leeward and Windward Islands did not join the Revolutionary struggle.

The British turned to German mercenaries hired from the principalities of Hesse and Kassel. Known by Americans as Hessians, a general overview of the Hessian participation in the American Revolution is offered by Rodney Atwood, The Hessians Mercenaries from Hesse-Kassel in the American Revolution (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990). Several first-hand accounts by Hessian officers and soldiers have been translated into English. Bruce E. Burgoyne has offered an English translation of Johann Conrad Dohla, A Hessian Diary of the American Revolution (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990) and Henrich Kummel, Diaries of a Hessian Chaplain and the Chaplain's Assistant (Pennsauken: Johannes Schwalm Historical Association, 1990). Other accounts include Johann Ewald, Diary of the American War: A Hessian Journal edited by Joseph P. Tustin (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979).

The Course of the Land War

The Battle of Bunker Hill is considered by Thomas J. Fleming in Now We Are Enemies: The Story of Bunker Hill (New York: St. Martin's, 1960) and Richard M. Ketchum's The Battle of Bunker Hill (Garden City: Doubleday, 1962). Bunker Hill along with ten other succeeding engagements are examined in W.J. Wood, Battles of the Revolutionary War, 1775-1781 (Chapel Hill: Algonquin Books, 1990). For the unsuccessful attempt by Americans to invade Canada in 1775 and early 1776, see Gustave Lanctot, Canada and the American Revolution, 1774-1783 trans. Margaret M. Cameron (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967).

For a detailed examination of the Battle of Long Island, see Ira D. Gruber's essay in Charles E. Heller and William A. Stofft, America's First Battles, 1776-1965 (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1986). The Battle of New York is examined in Bruce Bliven's Battle for Manhattan (New York: Holt, 1956). Still useful despite its age is Henry P. Johnson's The Campaign of 1776 Around New York and Brooklyn (1878, New York: DeCapo, 1971).

Washington saved his Army and the Revolutionary cause in December 1776 and early January 1777 with victories at Trenton and Princeton. For examinations of these small, but strategically significant engagements, see such classic works as Alfred Hoyt Bill, The Campaign of Princeton, 1776-1777 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1948); Charles Leonard Lundin, Cockpit of the Revolution: The War for Independence in New Jersey (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972) and William S. Stryker, The Battles of Trenton and Princeton (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1898). For a more recent study, see William Dwyer, The Day is Ours! November 1776-January 1777: An Inside View of the Battle of Trenton and Princeton (New York: Viking Press, 1983).

The Battle of Saratoga remained a crucial turning point in the struggle for independence.

Not only did American victory ensure that New England would not be isolated from the rest of the United States, but it also encouraged the French to formally ally with the United States. For the most recent account of the battle, see Richard M. Ketchum, Saratoga: Turning Point (New York: Holt, 1997). The last major confrontation between British forces and Washington's army took place at Monmouth Courthouse, New Jersey in 1778 and is considered by Samuel S. Smith, The Battle of Monmouth (Monmouth Beach: Philip Freneau Press, 1964).

During the Vietnam Era the southern campaigns sparked renewed interest among historians. Several historians saw parallels between the nature of the conflict in the South and the Vietnam War. This view can be found in Russell F. Weigley's The Partisan War: The Southern Campaign of 1780-1782 (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1970) and John Morgan Dederer, Making Bricks Without Straw: Nathanael Greene's Southern Campaigns and Mao Tse-Tung's Mobile War (Manhattan: Sunflower University Press, 1983). John S. Pancake, This Destructive War: The British Campaign for the Carolinas, 1780-1782 (University: University of Alabama Press, 1985) looks at the southern campaigns from the British perspective and examines the ultimately ill fated efforts to protect Loyalists in the region. For a more popular account of the southern campaign, see John Buchanan, The Road to Guilford Courthouse: The American Revolution in the Carolinas (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1997). Lawrence F. Babits in A Devil of a Whipping: The Battle of Cowpens (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998) draws upon both archeological evidence and veterans' records to overturn a number of earlier assumptions about this battle. For instance, he concludes that Daniel Morgan, the Revolutionary commander, had more men fighting for him than he later claimed. He also examines many of the tactical mistakes made by the British General Tarleton.

The war in the South was an especially brutal affair. In large parts of the South governmental authority collapsed and civilians often fell victim to lawlessness by armed mobs. The devastating impact of the war on the wider society is examined in several essays found in Ronald Hoffman, Thad W. Tate, and Peter J. Albert, eds., An Uncivil War: The Southern Backcountry during the American Revolution (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1985). Wayne Lee examines the growing violent nature of the Revolutionary War in Crowds and Soldiers in Revolutionary North Carolina: The Culture of Violence in Riot and War (Gainesville, University Press of Florida, 2001).

Recent scholarship has offered a more sophisticated understanding of the impact and participation of Native Americans in the Revolutionary War. Increasingly, scholars have seen Indian tribes as political actors who sought to use the conflict between Britain and her colonies as a way to bolster their position. With exceptions, most tribes aligned with the British and ultimately experienced significant losses as a result of the American victory. Among the best of these new histories are Richard White, The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lake Region, 1650-1815 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991) and Colin G. Calloway, The American Revolution in Indian Country: Crisis and Diversity in Native American Communities (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

For the role of the Iroquois in this struggle, see Barbara Graymont, The Iroquois in the American Revolution (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1972). There remained significant warfare between southern states and Indian tribes, see James H. O'Donnell III, Southern Indians in the American Revolution (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1973). The Cherokee are examined in M. Thomas Hatley, The Dividing Paths: Cherokees and South Carolinians

Through the Era of the Revolution (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

Substantial numbers of American, British, and Hessian troops were prisoners of war during the Revolutionary War. For the experience of American POWs, see Larry G. Bowman, Captive Americans: Prisoners During the American Revolution (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1976) and Sheldon S. Cohen, Yankee Sailors in British Gaols: Prisoners of War at Forton and Mill, 1777-1783 (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1995). For the treatment of British Prisoners of War, see Richard Sampson, Escape in America: The British Convention Prisoners, 1777-1783 (Chippenham: Picton Publishers, 1995).

The transition from peace to war was not an easy one. Richard Kohn in Eagle and the Sword: The Beginnings of the Military Establishment in America (New York: Free Press, 1975) examines the Newburgh Conspiracy and argues that this remained one of the most serious threats to civil control of the military in American history. Disgruntled officers fearing that they would not be paid hinted that they would use force to compel Congress to pay.

The War at Sea

The Continental Navy did not play a major role in the American Revolution. The vast superiority of the Royal Navy meant the Continental warships could generally succeed only if they engaged in single vessel confrontations. Commerce raiding by privateers remained an important part of the American war effort and did hinder British merchant shipping. For a single volume overviews of the role of the Continental Navy in the Revolutionary struggle, see William M. Fowler, Jr., Rebels Under Sail: The American Navy During the American Revolution (New York: Scribner's, 1976) and Barbara W. Tuchman, The First Salute: A View of the American

Revolution (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988). Still useful are Charles Oscar Paullin, The Navy of the American Revolution: Its Policy and Its Administration (Chicago: Burrows Brothers, 1906) and Gardner Weld Allen, Naval History of the American Revolution (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1913). John Paul Jones illustrious career is examined by Samuel Eliot Morison, John Paul Jones: A Sailor's Biography (Boston: Little Brown, 1959).

The U.S. Navy History Division began in the 1950s work on a multi-volume documentary history of the Continental Navy. Ten volumes have been published to date and they offer a wealth of primary source documents for not only naval engagements, but also extensive coverage of the daily lives of officers and sailors. Naval Documents of the American Revolution, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1964–) is edited by William Clark Bell, W. J. Morgan and others has carried the story of the Continental Navy through 1777.

The vital role of the French navy is traced by Jonathan R. Dull, The French Navy and American Independence: A Study of Arms and Diplomacy, 1774-1787 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975) and Barbara Lynch, comp. The War at Sea: France and the American Revolution (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976). For an introduction to the British naval war, see David Syrett, The Royal Navy in American Waters, 1775-1783 (Aldershot: Scolar, 1989); John A. Tilley, The British Navy and the American Revolution (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1987); and Nicholas Tracy, Navies, Deterrence, and American Independence: Britain and Seapower in the 1760s and 1770s (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1988). British navy's blockade of the American coast placed a heavy toll on the American war economy according to Richard Buel Jr.'s In Iron: Britain's Naval Supremacy and the Revolutionary War Economy (Yale University Press, 1998). The pivotal

naval engagement between British and French forces in Chesapeake Bay in 1781 that lead to Yorktown is covered in John O. Sands, Yorktown's Captive Fleet (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1983).

Aftermath of War

What happened to the Revolutionary generation after the war ended? Minor Myers, Jr. Liberty without Anarchy: A History of the Society of the Cincinnati (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1983) tells the story of the nation's first veterans organization. Many officers and enlisted personnel had a difficult time adjusting to civilian life. This is a central theme of Charles Royster's Light-Horse Lee and the Legacy of the American Revolution (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979).

A substantial number of veterans experienced poverty in the postwar period and in the aftermath of the War of 1812, the federal government created a federal pension to alleviate their distress. This system is examined by John P. Reach, Suffering Soldiers: Revolutionary War Veterans, Moral Sentiment, and Political Culture in the Early Republic (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999). The postwar lives of Revolutionary veterans who settled in the West is examined by Elizabeth A. Perkins, Border Life: Experience and Memory in the Revolutionary War Ohio Valley (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

How the Revolutionary generation commemorated their struggle for independence is explored by Len Travers, Celebrating the Fourth: Independence Day and the Rites of Nationalism in the Early Republic (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997); David Waldstreicher,

In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The Making of American Nationalism, 1776-1820 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997); and Susan G. Davis, Parades and Power: Street Theater in Nineteenth Century Philadelphia (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986). Michael Kammen, A Season of Youth: The American Revolution and the Historical Imagination (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978) examines the cultural memory of Revolutionary struggle in nineteenth and twentieth century America. G. Kurt Piehler in Remembering War the American Way (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995) compares the commemoration of the Revolutionary War with succeeding conflicts, including the Civil War, the world wars, and the Vietnam War.

For Reference and Further Reading

There are several indispensable reference works. For a single volume encyclopedia, see Mark Mayo Boatner, Encyclopedia of the American Revolution (New York: D. McKay, 1966). For more analytical reference source, see Jack P. Greene and J.R. Pole, editors, The Blackwell Encyclopedia of the American Revolution (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1991). For maps of Revolutionary America, including several key battles, see Lester Cappon's Atlas of Early American History: The Revolutionary Era, 1760-1790 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976). Also useful for biographies of key Revolutionary leaders and short battle histories, as well as longer interpretative essays is John Whiteclay Chambers II, The Oxford Companion to American Military History (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

There are a number of excellent magazines and journals that frequently publish articles and book reviews focusing on the American Revolution. The William and Mary Quarterly is

considered the definitive scholarly journal focusing on the colonial and Revolutionary War Era. The Journal of Military History is another indispensable journal that offers periodic reviews of books on the American Revolution, as well as occasional articles dealing with the war. For naval history, the most authoritative journal is American Neptune. Other journals and magazines that frequently run articles on the American Revolution include: American Heritage, American History Illustrated, Journal of American History, Military History Quarterly, and New England Quarterly. Several state historical societies publish journals that frequently include articles relating to the Revolutionary War, especially noteworthy are: Delaware History, New York History, New Jersey History, Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, and South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine.